



COLUMBIA RIVER FISHERMEN'S PROTECTIVE UNION

Spring 1994 / Vol. 25, No. 1

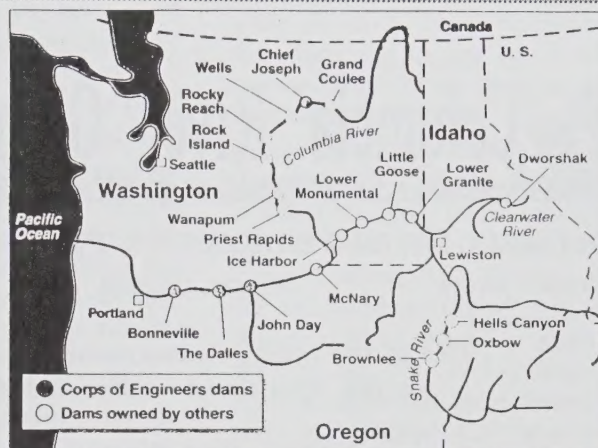
Are they working?

Fish preservation measures at Northwest dams may be doing more harm than good

Fish and hydroelectric dams are striving to coexist across the country. With conservation groups as well as state and federal agencies pressing for severe controls on water releases, hydropower production has been cut substantially in many cases. At the same time, dam operators have undertaken some sophisticated construction programs to meet the challenge.

Solutions will be costly, possibly ranging into the billions of dollars in modifications, in addition to the billions already spent. The problem is not a new one, nor is it one just recently recognized. For the past 40 years, government agencies and utilities have probed the impact of hydroelectric projects on fish.

The major fish problems are in the Pacific Northwest, involving dwindling salmon migrations on the Columbia and Snake rivers. Controversy rages over whether construction of new fish bypass systems at dams on those and other rivers will enhance fish survival or be costly boondoggles.



The U.S. Corps of Engineers owns eight dams on the Columbia and Snake, forming a navigable waterway running 370 miles from the Pacific to Lewiston, Idaho. They also generate power and provide irrigation water.

Beginning with construction in the 1930s of Bonneville Dam, the first and lowest on the Columbia, the Corps has spent \$1 billion on fish protection measures.

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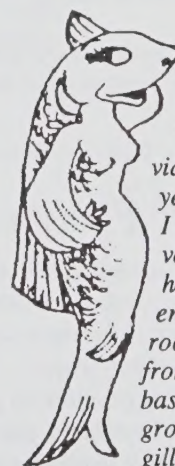
Someone's finally listening: Environmental group says dams must go

Many experts say that the gradual removal of a good portion of lower Columbia River hydroelectric dams is the only way to save salmon, and many conservation as well as commercial fishing groups agree.

"This is a radical proposal," says Andy Kerr, a 38-year-old member of the Oregon Natural Resources Council. "But just because it is radical does not mean it is not reasonable. The aluminum industry is killing [millions of] salmon. We ought to let the dinosaur die."

Kerr is among a growing number of environment-conscious interests which are calling for the destruction of 14 hydroelectric

Please turn to page 5



Sally the Salmon Says...

"Boy, I sure wish I had a video camera during this year's winter gillnet season. I watched dozens of hungry, voracious seals and sea lions, hearing the buzz of boat engines, quickly slide from the rocks and embark in unison from the east end mooring basin, headed for the fishing grounds and the helpless gillnetters."

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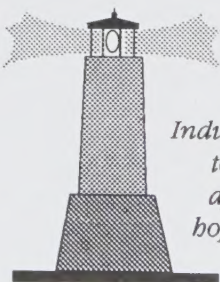
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FOREWORD

The Columbia River Gillnetter is the pilot of the Lower Columbia River Commercial Fishing Industry, keeping fishermen and the public in touch with today's important issues. The advertisements which appear make it possible to publish this paper, and we hope you will, in return, patronize and thank the people who support our livelihood.



EDITOR'S PAGE / *Of salmon, seals and sturgeon*

1994 Lower Columbia River gillnetters have been incorrectly blamed for the decline of salmon and steelhead on the Columbia and the Snake for years.

Remembering the time when our fishing days on the river numbered in the hundreds, there were only *seventeen* in 1993, and our seasons are shorter every year.

Last year was another long year of drought and El Nino, and continued poor ocean feeding conditions caused many runs of fish to starve to death from lack of food.

But it has become increasingly clear in the past few years that gillnet fishermen are *not* the cause of the decline of salmon and steelhead on the Columbia and the Snake. Our seasons, which target only surplus fish, have dwindled almost to nothing and the wild fish still aren't coming back.

The major villains killing fish are hydroelectric dams, discussed in depth inside this issue, which kill about 90 percent of salmon fingerlings before they even get to Portland. Other causes include pollution, clear-cut logging and habitat degradation.

Gillnetters, meanwhile, landed only **2,049** chinook during their 19-day '94 winter season on the lower river, up slightly from the 1,600 caught during last year's "no jeopardy" winter fiasco. In 1991, just three years ago, gillnetters reeled in more than **13,000** salmon during the 13-day winter season.

"The current estimate of the white sturgeon population greater than 24 inches in the lower Columbia approaches one million."

Just as Idaho potato farmers harvest the land to feed Americans, Columbia River gillnet fishermen harvest the sea, putting healthy seafood on the world's dinner table without endangering any threatened species.

Sturgeon is an incidental gillnet catch which becomes a special seasonal treat for the fish-buying public, yet sports fishermen think they should have them all to themselves. They've been screaming for years that gillnetters are catching too many, yet sportsmen caught more than **five times** as many sturgeon as did gillnetters in 1993.

They've got their nerve.

They catch almost **40,000** sturgeon, gillnetters catch **8,000** and they say we're catching too many. It figures out to an 82-18 percentage and they're still not happy. They want 'em all.

It wouldn't be so bad if the sturgeon were threatened or endangered, but their numbers are quite large.

"The white sturgeon population of the lower Columbia is currently healthy, as indicators for the sub-legal (40-inch) and the brood stock (72-inch) population are very good," says the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. "The current estimate of the total white sturgeon population

greater than 24 inches in the lower Columbia approaches **one million**."

Meanwhile, back at the dams, salmon are being killed by the millions, yet the giant turbines roar on. There's been studies, meetings and more studies and essentially nothing's been done to stop the tremendous slaughter of salmon.

Talk is cheap.

Saving salmon is somewhat more costly, however, as it requires a long-term commitment and the removal of thirteen hydroelectric dams on the Columbia and the Snake, which is not a popular solution among all who benefit from the cheap power dams provide.

But if we *don't* touch existing dams on the river like Oxbow, Brownlee, Lower Granite, Hells Canyon and Ice Harbor, which we should, then we certainly should *not* allow the completion of the proposed Elk Creek facility, or the construction of four hydroelectric operations at Milltown Hill (also on Elk Creek), Abert Lake, Chiloquin and Salt Caves, all in southern Oregon.

Certain dams are necessary for flood control, but strategic removal of a handful of the worst of them would be a world of help.

Enough is enough, but it may be too late, anyway. Dam removal is a drastic measure, yes, but drastic measures are needed if we are to expect the salmon to return.

They can't do it on their own.

—Don Riswick



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Dams: When it counted, nobody listened

In addition to installations at dams, they include building hatcheries and carrying juvenile salmon around dams in barges and trucks.

But it received a shock upon completion of the second powerhouse at Bonneville ten years ago. The work added a fish ladder to the project which has a bypass system consisting of screens to deflect fish up from the power turbine intakes into a conduit that deposits them downstream.

The design of the bypass was based on years of experience and research. Its forebay is upstream of the original project, so it attracts more juvenile fish.

The bypass cost about \$100 million, but it doesn't work. "It passed only 10 percent more fish through the turbines," says Rock Peters, a fish biologist with the Portland district of the Corps. And the survival rate of those flushed through the turbines — **85 percent** or more — is better than juveniles taking the bypass.

The problem is that the bypass outlet is placed too close to the shore and in calm, slow water. Voracious squawfish congregate at the outlet, and feast on dazed young salmon as they emerge.

Last summer, the Corps removed the fish deflection screens so summer chinook can pass freely through the turbines. It will install redesigned screens this year, in time to try to help the migration of spring chinook.

"The second powerhouse was state of the art in the early 1980s," says Peters. "We are just starting to learn about fish behavior and we have a long way to go. Bonneville is a nightmare."

The experience there is an expensive example of what others want to avoid, says Richard Nason, fish and wildlife supervisor for the Chelan County PUD. It owns two dams on the upper Columbia that face fish problems as well.

"The problems at Bonneville Dam were a real eye-opener and quite a shock to everyone in the fisheries community," says Michael Schiewe, director of the National Marine Fisheries Service's coastal

—Continued on page 23



WATCHING THE BOATS GO BY — Motor boat races during the Astoria Regatta were quite the thing back in 1911. Here the passenger ferry "Hulda" is joined by various cannery tenders gathered at the waterfront grandstand to watch the boats race by.

Winter season not the best

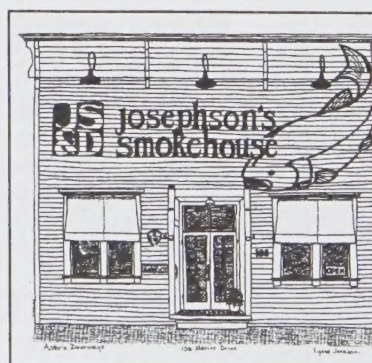
Gillnetters set their nets into the cold waters of the lower Columbia for the opening of the 1994 winter season at noon Tuesday, February 15.

Results were less than spectacular, especially in the lower zones, with just **304** chinook caught during the first three weeks of the season. Fishermen caught a total of **2,049** salmon during the 19-day season which ended the evening of March 10. Of these, only **83** were thought to be upriver fish, according to the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

Most of the chinook caught during the season was in the last week of fishing, the week of March 6-10. Rarely do gillnetters get to fish into the month of March, but Columbia River Compact officials had set a pre-season quota of 6,000 salmon, and it was not thought possible to approach that figure in the final four days of fishing.

Sport anglers, meanwhile, fished undisturbed until Easter Sunday, and fisheries officials estimate they will catch about **160** endangered Snake River fish, *double* the number caught by gillnetters.

Lower river gillnet fishermen caught only 1,600 chinook during the 1993 winter season, a season fraught with a delayed "no jeopardy" ruling from the fisheries service, which forced gillnetters off the river for ten days during the height of the run, even though sports fishermen were allowed to fish.



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Dams

dams in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, a measure they say is radically necessary to save dwindling salmon runs.

Columbia River Gillnetters have been pushing for dam removal and appropriate fish passage capabilities for years and years — even before they were built — but only now are people finally starting to realize maybe there really was something to what we were saying.

But it may be too late.

It was the Columbia River Fishermen's Union which stepped forward back in the 1930s to suggest to Bonneville Dam engineers that fish ladders were essential to maintaining fish runs on the river, when the original plans did not call for them.

At Grand Coulee, one of the major longtime killers of Columbia River salmon, the system went on line nearly sixty years ago with no fish ladders or passage facilities in place, even though CRFPU and many other groups strongly pushed for them.

Today, it is a sad sight to see mature salmon pounding their noses against the concrete at Grand Coulee. Just how did they expect the fish to make it past the huge towering structures and the giant killer turbines? Was cheap electricity more important?

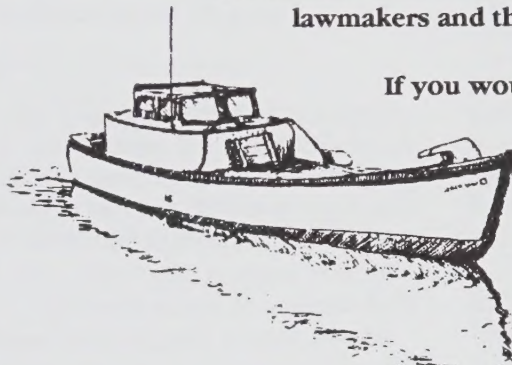
Rarely do the interests of environmental groups and fishermen coincide, but on the point of dam removal, we're in the same boat and right on track.

Please turn to page 29

Support your Union and the Columbia River Gillnetter!

The Columbia River Fishermen's Union would like to remind Lower Columbia commercial fishermen that we depend solely upon annual membership dues and individual donations to keep us afloat and in touch with the many important issues facing the commercial fishing industry today.

The *Columbia River Gillnetter* is the only remaining publication on the west coast devoted exclusively to gillnetting. We have been making a difference for more than 25 years, but our continued existence is threatened by increasing production and mailing costs. Now more than ever, we need a voice to represent our side of the issue, and the *Gillnetter* is our only contact with fishermen, lawmakers and the general public.



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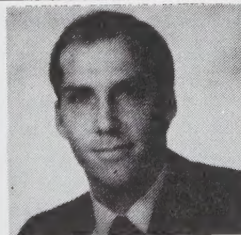
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Articles, letters and photographs are welcome for submission.

STURGEON REPORT: *What's going on above Bonneville Dam*



Over the past many years, sturgeon fisheries between Bonneville and McNary dams on the upper Columbia River have consisted of treaty Indian commercial, treaty Indian subsistence and non-Indian sport fisheries.

Treaty Indian commercial fishing is conducted with three types of gear: hook-and-line, setlines and gillnets. Non-Indian fishing is restricted to hook-and-line only. Treaty Indian fishermen may take fish for subsistence use by hook-and-line year-round, and using the same gear allowed during open commercial seasons.

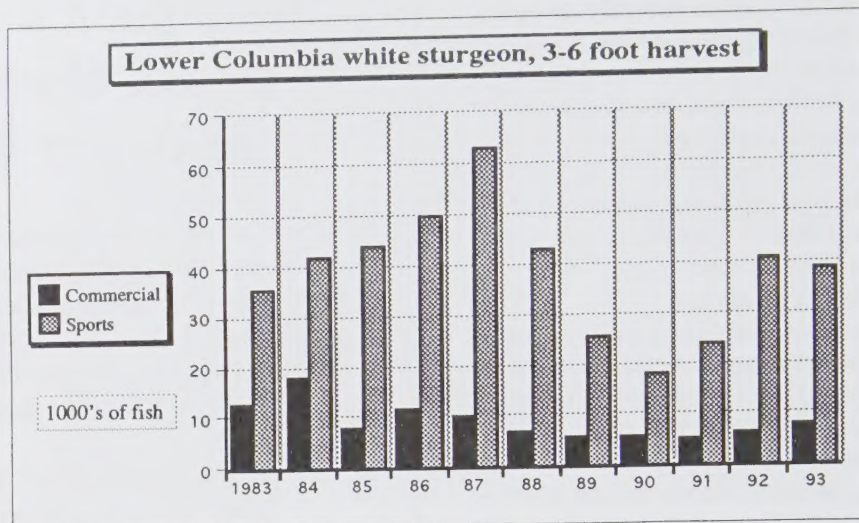
Each year the Columbia River Compact and the tribes set specific seasons for commercial setline and gillnet fisheries. Setline seasons are considered target sturgeon fisheries, while gillnet seasons are usually set to target salmon or steelhead.

Seasons for sport sturgeon fishing and treaty Indian subsistence take have always been open the entire year.

Winter gillnet seasons on the upper river have been established each year since 1973. **The principal species landed in winter seasons are steelhead and sturgeon.** Gillnet fisheries have produced more than 60 percent of the treaty Indian sturgeon harvest since 1985.

The sport fishery in Zone 6 is much smaller than the sport fishery on the lower river. Limited sampling in 1980-86 indicated the average annual sport catch from Bonneville to McNary was about 5,000 sturgeon.

ODF&W continues to be concerned about the stock status of sturgeon between Bonneville and McNary, based on



THE BIGGER PIECE OF THE PIE

Next time you hear someone talk about how many sturgeon gillnetters catch compared to sports fishermen on the lower Columbia River, show them this graph, which compares gillnet catches to recreational catches during the past ten years. Look who's getting the bigger piece of the pie!

indications of a high exploitation rate, reduced abundance and reproduction. Ongoing sturgeon research projects in three dam pools have indicated that significant stock decline occurred in The Dalles and John Day pools in the 1980s, with the most dramatic decline at John Day.

Results suggest that sturgeon populations in the pools have not changed substantially in the past three years, despite the implementation of strict harvest restrictions all along the river.

Treaty Indian subsistence sturgeon fishing is open year-round, with small closures near dams.

The recreational minimum sturgeon size limit in the Bonneville pool increased from 40 inches to 42 inches, and the maximum size limit decreased from 72 inches to 66 inches on January 1, making sport size restrictions uniform on the entire river. Lower river commercial and sportfishermen also received scaled-down size limits.

The annual bag limit for all Washington and Oregon anglers was reduced from 15 to 10 on the same date.

Columbia River sturgeon fisheries are expected to have no impact on Snake River salmon.

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DAM UPDATE: Judge says status quo won't cut it anymore

A district judge has sent the federal government back to the drawing board to come up with a better plan to operate hydroelectric dams to save declining salmon runs.

U.S. District Judge Malcolm F. Marsh says federal agencies like the National Marine Fisheries Service, which approved a plan last year submitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, have taken the easy way out with their plans to barge salmon around dams and install several new protective screens. Their plan says the survival of Snake River salmon would not be jeopardized by Columbia River dam operations.

But Marsh disagrees, saying these policymakers have settled for tinkering, rather than addressing the real problem.

"They have narrowly focused their attention on what the establishment is capable of handling with minimal disruption. The process is seriously flawed because it is too heavily geared toward a status quo that has allowed all forms of river activity to proceed in a deficit situation — that is, relatively small steps, minor improvements and adjustments — when the situation literally cries out for a major overhaul," he says.

The Portland judge has set a May deadline for the first draft of the new dam plan.

Threats of higher future utility rates from the Columbia River Alliance, the group which represents aluminum companies, barge operators and electric utilities along the river, have already been made.

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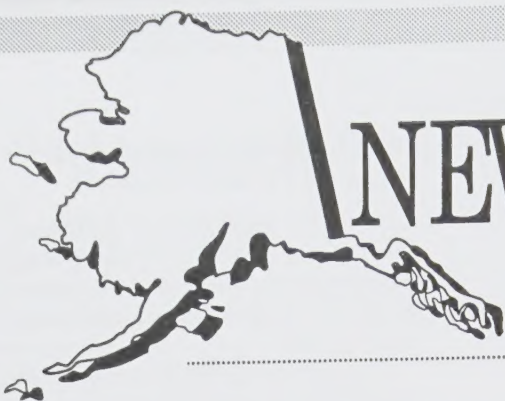
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NEWS from the NORTH

BRISTOL BAY '94: GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

Fishermen on Alaska's infamous Bristol Bay have come to expect just about anything when they travel north for the summer to ply the cold waters of the Bering Sea, and 1994 promises not to disappoint.

Just like last year, there's good news and bad news.

Nearly 40 million wild red salmon were caught by gillnetters in 1993, surpassing the former 37.3 million record caught in 1983. This summer, the University of Washington's Fisheries Research Institute says records will fall once again, as anywhere from 50 to 60 million or more sockeye could return to the bay, with fishermen reeling in a staggering catch of more than 43 million.

But the bad news is fishermen received just 60 cents per pound for their catches last year, and experts say 1994 prices will almost surely be lower.

Bristol Bay gillnetters have heard all the stories from their buyers about plentiful and improved-quality farmed fish, low market prices and the fluctuating yen, but a rumored forty- to fifty-cent fish price will be hard to swallow after

"You just can't make any money at 40 or 50 cents a pound. It's just not realistic when you're paying a dollar and a half for a gallon of gas."

getting an average of about \$1.10 just two years ago.

According to FRI, the wild Egegik district should once again be the hot spot, with a forecasted catch of about 20 million fish, just slightly less than the record 22 million caught here in 1993.

Selling their salmon became a real challenge for some Egegik and Ugashik fishermen last year during the peak of the run, as several smaller buyers reached their capacity and forced many fishermen to throw their hard work over the side.

Fishermen in the Naknek/Kvichak district will also be busy, as nearly 24 million sockeye are expected to return here, with a catch forecast of about 14.5 million, up significantly from the 8 million caught last year. One million salmon are needed for escapement.

The Kvichak section of the district, unusually weak last year, is expected to account for some 19 million salmon this summer, with a hefty escapement goal of 8 million and a healthy catch prediction of about 11 million. In 1993, fishermen fished these waters only a matter of hours, and still its minimum escapement goal of four million fish was just barely met.

The Nushagak district should have a strong showing again this year, with nearly six million fish returning, and a scheduled catch of about 4 million. Last year, gillnetters here landed some 5.4 million reds, nearly double the number caught in 1992.

Ugashik fishermen should expect a healthy return of about 6 million sockeye this year, with a catch of 5.25 million.

Still, the positive fish numbers pale a bit when factoring in the expected low fish price. "You just can't make any money at 40 or even 50 cents a pound," said one bay fisherman. "It's just not realistic when you're paying a dollar and a half for a gallon of gas, and three dollars for a loaf of bread."

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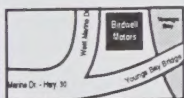
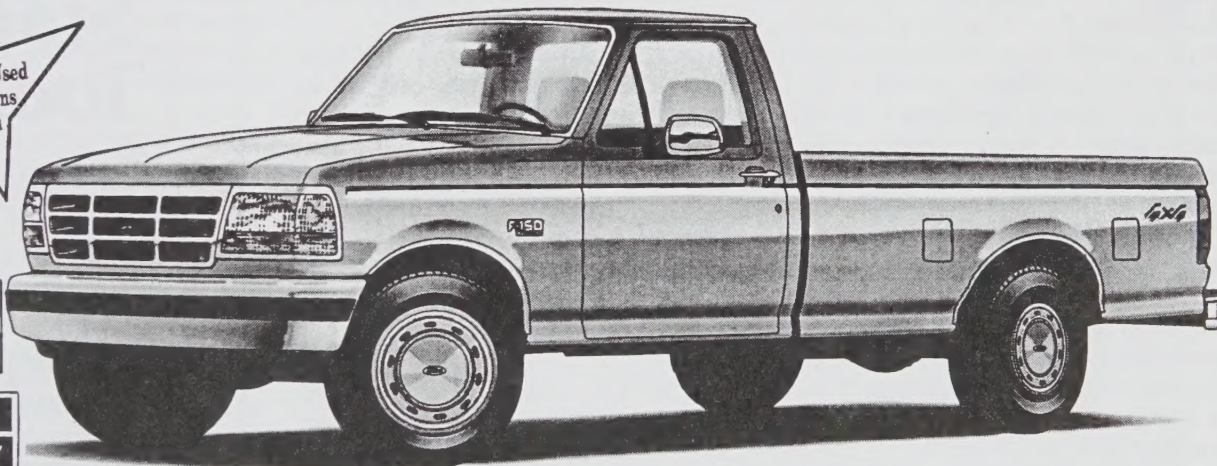
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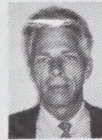
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TRoubLED WATERS: *A classic battle between gillnet and sport fishermen rages on*

NAPLES, Florida — Local commercial fisherman Bobby Johnson recalls the days, 20 years ago, when his profession knew absolute freedom.

"The more populated it's got, the more freedom's we've lost," said the old-time fisherman as he cruised his mullet skiff around the south end of Key Island early one morning.

The government's efforts to preserve fish has led to a multitude of regulations on commercial fishermen, on the size of nets, how long they can be in the water and when they can be used. Sport fishermen also have restrictions on the size and numbers of fish they can catch and when they can catch them.

Johnson winces at the prospect of the ultimate regulation on commercial gillnet fishermen: the banning of those nets, which catch mullet, pompano and mackerel. The idea is being pushed by sport fishermen who compete for their share of fish.

In the most serious battle in the age-old fight between those who fish for fun and those who fish for a living, a coalition of sport fishermen and environmentalists are close to gaining enough signatures at this printing on a petition to ask Florida voters to decide in November whether commercial fishermen should ever use gillnets again.

The measure would also force shrimpers to use their trawl nets further offshore.

If voters approve the plan, the state Marine Fisheries Commission cannot reverse the constitutional amendment without proper referendum, even if the fish population rebounds.

"Gillnetting is one of the oldest professions in the world, and they're making us feel like criminals when all we're doing is feeding the nation."

Local seafood restaurateur Kelly Ellis says a net ban would mean fish caught with those nets will disappear from the menus of dockside seafood restaurants that rely on local catches or consumers will pay more.

While backers of the plan say fishermen can survive without the nets, fishermen say it will break them. Both sides are launching intense campaigns fraught with confusing statistics about what the ban would do to the fishing industry.

While sport fishermen blame commercial fishermen for the demise of the fisheries, commercial fishermen say development and pollution are more to blame, and that sport fishermen are having more of an impact on the health of the fisheries than they care to admit.

Marine regulators say the greed of both groups is to blame, but they declined to get into the politics of who is more at fault. They said habitat loss and pollution are significant factors, and that regardless of what is ruining the fisheries, the damage is done.

Russell Nelson, executive director of the Florida Marine Fisheries Commission, said mullet, a delicacy in east Asia, are greatly at risk. Recent regulations have closed the waters to mullet fishing from noon Fridays until noon Mondays during the season, which runs from late

October to late January. To further protect the mullet, a total ban is in effect in southwest Florida for 10 days between Christmas and New Year's, the height of the roe season.

During the mullet season, the fish travel from the estuaries out to the deeper waters of the Gulf to spawn. Fishermen catch them on their way out in the passes and near shore. Like most fish, mullet movements are triggered by the weather.

Instead of being worth 25 cents a pound at the dock, mullet stuffed with roe is worth about \$1.80. Florida, the country's largest producer of mullet, produces 80 percent of the roe that's exported.

Continued on page 22

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To the Editor

The Lower Columbia Economic Development Council represents many small rural fishing communities on the lower Columbia River.

For generations, fishing has provided them with an important economic base. Due to the Endangered Species Act, our communities are in economic transition. Our fishing industry is struggling to adjust to conservation measures it has voluntarily negotiated to ensure a healthy salmon resource.

We resent the latest advertising campaign by the Columbia River Alliance, which includes direct-service industries and investor-owned utilities. They have benefited from the publicly-subsidized hydroelectric system.

The inflammatory language contained in these ads is a transparent attempt to confuse the public. The ads make no reference to scientific fact and are aimed at garnering an emotional response.

—Sharon Hart, Lower Columbia Economic Development Council, Skamokawa, Washington

Recent advertisements by the Columbia River Alliance are an affront to the collective efforts of all other parties in the region that are striving for cooperative salmon restoration.

Calling for a ban on fishing to protect threatened Snake River stocks is a diversionary tactic that does nothing to move the region toward the real decisions that will rebuild salmon runs.

Instead, the ads endorse policies that have failed to protect the abundance of nature from the exploitation of big business. These policies threaten the cultural practices of tribal peoples and all others who appreciate and depend on salmon resources.

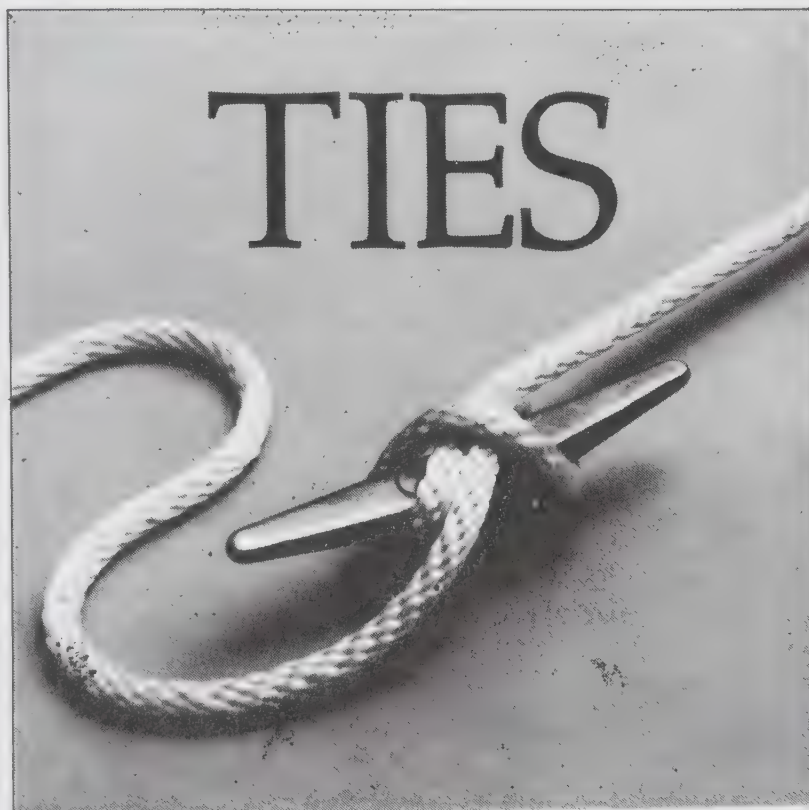
The ads by the alliance, whose members include primarily the aluminum, irrigation and utility industries, are not supported by truth. Harvest is *not* a threat to Snake River salmon.

According to figures from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the dams kill 55 to 76 percent of the juvenile Snake River spring and summer chinook. Of the returning adults, the hydro system harvests 33 to 41 percent, while ocean and in-river fisheries harvest 10 percent.

—Ted Strong, executive director, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission



RESTING COMFORTABLY — A string of trollers bobs gently in the still waters of Astoria's west end mooring basin back in the 1960s. Note the old Port of Astoria building in the background which has since been torn down.



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Fights over Fish: Those were the days Continued from the Winter issue

1908 At issue were the fishing advantages of gillnetters on the lower Columbia and the fishwheel operators at the Cascades and near Celilo Falls on the upper Columbia.

The initiative petition of the downriver fishermen, which passed, closed the Columbia above the junction with the Sandy River "to all fishing gear except hook and line."

This, in effect, eliminated the seines and fishwheels on the upper river. The initiative petition of the upriver interests, which also passed, restricted commercial fishing to daylight hours only. Since night was the principal time for gillnetting, this effectively closed the lower Columbia to gillnetting.

Master Fish Warden H.C. McAllister vigorously attempted to enforce these laws adopted by the people of Oregon, and arrested fishermen from both Oregon and Washington. But a restraining order issued September 1908, by Circuit Judge William B. Gilbert prevented McAllister from enforcing the new law within the territorial limits of the state of Washington.

So as not to give an unfair advantage to Washington fishermen, the injunction was then extended to include the territorial waters of Oregon as well.

The 1909 session of the Oregon Legislature, working in conjunction with the Washington Legislature, attempted to straighten out the problem but only succeeded in adding to the confusion by neglecting to add the words "and its tributaries" to fishery legislation jointly agreed upon by the two states.

This omission left the fishermen in the vicinity of Oregon City who fished the Willamette and Clackamas rivers with 15 days of fishing time in March and April, while all the other commercial fishermen



An old picture postcard depicts Celilo Falls on the Columbia River sometime during the 1920s.

were restricted from fishing the mainstem of the Columbia and its tributaries in Washington.

The 1908 initiative in which up and downriver fishermen tried to eliminate one another's gear was followed by the first of the sports angler versus commercial fishermen ballot measure conflicts.

On November 8, 1910, Oregon voters passed a sports initiative which closed the Rogue River to commercial gear. This was the first of five ballot measures dealing with commercial fishing on the Rogue. The anglers of the Rogue River Fish Protective Association claimed the measure was "to prevent the utter extermination of fish in the Rogue River."

Meanwhile, the Rogue River (commercial) Fishermen's Union blamed conservation problems on hydroelectric dams and defective or nonexistent fish ladders, blaming the Fish Commission for failing to take appropriate action when it had due authority to do so.

Sport anglers continued to chip away at commercial fisheries via ballot initiative, closing the Willamette River south of Oswego to gillnetters in 1918, the Nestucca River in 1927, the Rogue, Chetco and Elk rivers in 1935, and finally all coastal streams in 1956.

The last major fish fight between groups of commercial fishermen was in 1926, and illustrates how social and economic issues become infused with conservation arguments.

Gillnetters, with support from the Oregon State Grange, the Oregon Federation of Labor and the Oregon Fish Commission, put an initiative on the ballot this year to remove fishwheels, traps and seines from the Columbia. Opposed were the upriver processing interests and businessmen who owned most of the fishwheels, primarily the Warren and Seufert families and their employees.

Continued on next page

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All of the canneries in Astoria, with the exception of the Union Fishermen's Cooperative, opposed the initiative. Most of the seines were owned and operated by the canneries who leased the valuable Sand Island seining grounds from the federal government. Sportsmen sided with the proponents of the petition.

Each side accused the other of monopolistic practices, absurd and untruthful assertions, and of being a threat to conservation of the salmon resource. The proponents claimed that fishwheels were a "practical monopoly of the fishing in-

dustry on the Upper Columbia River," where a "few wealthy and powerful individuals have succeeded through the enactment of special privilege laws, in virtually appropriating the right of public fishing to themselves."

The upriver interests countered, "The grossly unjust and un-American purpose of this dangerous bill is to monopolize the fish industry and to control, so as to raise, the price of fish to the consuming public." Proponents found the fact that only 7-8 percent of the fish were caught in wheels absurd because "the fact re-

mains that they take practically all the fish that, having escaped the gear in 150 miles of tidewater, should be entitled to proceed, unencumbered, to their spawning grounds to lay their eggs and perpetuate the industry."

Upriver interests claimed that the Columbia River salmon runs were on the increase, and that claims of salmon scarcity were "designed to deceive" voters. On this conservation issue the upriver interests followed the argument of U.S. Fish Commissioner Henry O'Malley who said, "Each form of gear used is responsible for depletion in proportion to the number of fish it takes."

He went on to assert that "the greatest destroyer of salmon has been the upper-country power dams and canals."

Proponents countered by claiming that fishwheels took too many early-run Royal Chinook salmon and criticized the drag seines for taking too many silvers and steelhead. "Three seines which operate above the Cascade Rapids in pools, where tired fish stop to rest after their struggle through the turbulent waters, take hundreds of tons of fish."

Upon the passage of the initiative, upriverites sought to use the courts and legislature to reverse the decision of the people, arguing that "the initiative manner of making laws deprives those living in sparsely-settled districts of proper representation, is it not un-American... is it not the intention of the Constitution to afford protection to the minority?"

The upriver argument regarding the rights of minorities and their attempt to reverse the popular decision in the courts and legislature where a more studied approach to the facts could be made, illustrated fish fight tactics and raised the issue of how decisions should be made.

This decision-making issue has pervaded the American democracy since its inception. It is an issue with no definite so-

Continued on next page



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lution, only a continual search for a satisfactory mix.

In a May 10, 1924 letter, Master Fish Warden Carl Shoemaker wrote Governor Pierce and presented an argument for the successful practice of conservation.

"I want to call your attention to one pertinent fact, and that is that the salmon has no friend except the Fish Commission. If the packers and fishermen were allowed to carry out their own ideas, fishing would be conducted throughout the year, and the streams would be open from the mouth to the source."

Shoemaker expressed the opinion that only the action of the Fish Commission established the nursery pond system over the opposition of fishermen and packers.

Broad participation has been practiced in two ways. The first and most obvious was the 21 ballot measures in which the Oregon electorate have had to make major policy decisions relative to management of fisheries. The second was more subtle, and was a situation in which citizens undertook to influence the actions of other citizens.

One case was the 1964 initiative sponsored by Save Our Salmon, which would have closed the Columbia to commercial gillnetting. An emotional campaign was conducted in which more than 1000 people from the Astoria area boarded some 30 buses and took their case to the citizens of the Willamette Valley. The initiative was defeated.

In between the extremes of decision-making by knowledgeable members of the Fish Commission and ballot measures decided by the electorate was the Oregon Legislature, which, during each session, acted on numerous fish-related issues. As early as 1887 a special committee was appointed by the legislature to review the fisheries problem.

The committee found that reducing the numbers of fishers on the river was a top

"Each side accused the other of monopolistic practices, absurd and untruthful assertions and of being a threat to the resource."

priority, but was not accomplished. The ideas of fishermen as well as the wider society emphasized that this country was built on the principle of "free enterprise," which means people should be allowed to try to make or break themselves in whatever enterprise they may choose. The successful will stay and flourish, while the unlucky ones will quit and try something different.

An editorial in the *Astorian* at the time echoed this sentiment:

"Like nearly every other line of business, that of fishing the waters of the Columbia, has, to a certain extent been overdone. Some months ago there was considerable talk among the fishermen to

the effect that there were too many engaged in the business to make it profitable to all. At the time there seemed to be quite a sentiment in favor of some means of reducing the number of men fishing on the river.

"Butchers, bakers, grocers, dry goods-men, doctors, lawyers and even farmers, have passed through the same experience, and many are today suffering from too much competition. From all appearances the same competition will last to the end of time. The fittest will survive."

In 1974, British Columbia, Alaska and Washington were attempting to implement regulations of this type, referred to as "limited entry." The other approaches, controlling fishing time and the type of gear used, have been used in Oregon since 1878, when closed seasons and mesh/trap size regulations were imposed.

An 1890 statement on the condition of the salmon fishery from the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union stated:

"The business is still beset by many

Good luck Alaska fishermen!



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great difficulties, of which we intend to give a short resume, and believe that 'the greatest good to the greatest number' is still an ever-living maxim among our fellow countrymen."

The union message went on to discuss how the traps, seines and fishwheels were reducing the number of fish. This set the tone for what has been the pattern of fish fights, to eliminate types of fishing apparatus rather than control the number of fishermen using each kind of gear.

Fishermen, however, are by nature, innovators, searching for techniques, gear and fishing patterns which will enable larger catches. Fishermen developed the concept of drifts, the diver net, the Columbia River bar fishery, the Columbia River gillnet boat as well as ocean trolling. They adopted power boats and power-operated gear with the development of the gasoline engine at the turn of the century.

In order to conserve a resource in a context in which the resource is to serve the largest number of fishermen possible, regulations must operate to make fishermen less effective at catching fish. Of course each rule to reduce effectiveness results in a new innovation on the part of fishermen to maintain and improve their catches.

Thus, in addition to too many fishermen, the problem was too many *innovative* fishermen.

Having conservation rules was one thing, enforcing them was quite another. Closed seasons and gear restrictions were viewed by fishermen, processors and state officials as a farce. An 1889 Fish Commission report stated that:

"The law was very well observed the first year, but there were many violations the second year. The past six years the law has been a dead letter on the statutes. Had the literal law been enforced this year, property worth in excess of \$200,000 would have been confiscated. While owing to the wealth of the packers, they could borne the loss without serious hardship, but not so with fishermen who have their all in their fishing gear."

New laws and regulations have been written restricting fishing time and gear type. Fisheries managers were reluctant to decide any specifics, however. Conflicts over what type of gear provided the "greatest good to the greatest number" have generally been decided in ballot measure elections, where uninformed, misled voters are asked what type of gear can be used, or if commercial fishing should be allowed at all.

Conflicts have generally been decided in elections where uninformed, misled voters are asked what type of gear should be used, or if commercial fishing should be allowed at all

Fish fights fought through ballot measures have placed upriver against downriver, trapmen against gillnetter, sports against commercial, in conflict with one another over access to fish resources.

The trend of the results of these ballot measure elections has been for the gear which take the most fish to be eliminated. The argument generally accused these items of gear as being a threat to the conservation of the fishery resource.

Scarcity of salmon in relation to the number of fishermen was the basic issue in each of Oregon's wild fights over fish.

That there was not enough to satisfy all the desires of the many different fishermen led to conflict with one group attempting to gain more allocation over another. Sixteen of the no less than 21 ballot measures which have surfaced so

far have dealt with issues between sport anglers and commercial fishermen. Typically, sportsmen have pointed to scarcity, while gillnetters claimed that by observing conservation rules set forth, there was indeed enough "salmon for all."

The background for these arguments is clear. People perceive sport anglers as many in number but take few fish per fisherman, while commercial fishermen are few in number but take large numbers of fish. Commercial fishermen are also perceived as taking the largest portions of the harvest, when many times the opposite is true.

A study by the Oregon Fish Commission on the Umpqua River in 1946 revealed sport catches of 50 to 100 fish per day in the 1920s. Catches of this caliber would have made any gillnetter happy anytime during the 100-year history of the practice.

The Umpqua sport chinook catch in 1946 also far exceeded the commercial harvest, while between 1962 and 1971 sport anglers caught no less than 89 percent of the total winter steelhead run harvest on the Columbia.

In spite of these unique facts, the pressure was on commercial fishermen to

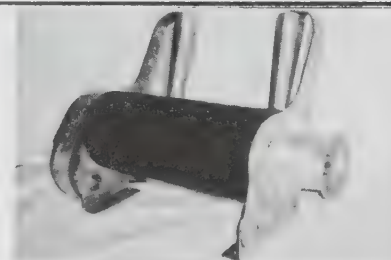
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Canadians say, "Where have all the fish gone?"

Newfoundland's once-thriving cod fishery faces extinction and a soaring unemployment rate

NEWFOUNDLAND — American fishermen are not the only ones feeling the pinch of tough economic times.

For nearly five-hundred years the cold waters of the North Atlantic were thick with cod. Now commercial and recreational fishermen in eastern Canada are facing the extinction of their industry, and it may be too late.

"Other than a few crab and turtles, we've got nothing left to fish," says Glen Whyte, a 32-year-old Catalina Island fisherman who struggles to make ends meet.

"My grandpa fished. My father fished. But now there's no fish left," he says. "We just can't make it."

Newfoundland's once-thriving North Atlantic cod fisheries, which have employed thousands of people for years, have all but disappeared — along with the fish. More than 1200 jobs were lost when a major dockside processing plant closed its doors early this year.

Where have the fish gone? The Canadian government says it's a mystery, and has set a total ban on cod fishing, both sport and commercial, in the North Atlantic. It lists cooler ocean temperature conditions as a possible explanation of poor fish survival, as well as the large number of foreign fishing vessels who ply the area throughout the year.

Another possibility, perhaps most plausible, is the vast explosion of seal numbers after a government-imposed ban on seal hunting. Similar to the situation here on the west coast, fish-hungry seals (and sea lions) have become a major threat to a wide number of important east coast fisheries.

"You don't have to be a raving genius to come to the conclusion that the seals are not eating cabbages and turnips and carrots, they're eating fish, because that's all there is in the sea," said Clyde Wells, Premier of Newfoundland.

Today the easternmost province of Canada, with a population of about 500,000 people, is experiencing soaring unemployment rates of up to 60 percent in some coastal areas.

Brian Tobin, Canadian Fisheries Minister, says **overfishing** has played a major role in the dwindling North Atlantic cod fishery, and says fisheries practices have got to change.

"We're not declaring war, we're declaring a state of conservation," Tobin says. Both sport and commercial fishermen are affected, and status quo is not an option. "They've simply got to face the fact that they've caught them all."

SALMON BURGERS DEBUT AT KODIAK McDONALD'S

KODIAK — Famous for the Big Mac, the nation's largest hamburger chain has released a new "salmon burger" made from Alaska pink salmon on a trial basis at its Kodiak franchise.

The salmon burger's creators, a Kodiak fish processor and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, say the burger could help boost new markets for Alaska's important salmon export commodity.

"We're always looking for these kinds of cooperative ventures, where we can put our expertise to work to create new seafood products," said Chuck Crapo, a seafood specialist with the UAF Sea Grant program.

The salmon burger, which sells for \$2.79, is the latest product to find a start at the Kodiak McDonald's. Last year, popular salmon "nuggets" were introduced here, says owner Garry Ervin.

"I've got friends losing their boats because of low fish prices and bad markets. I'm just one person, but I'm doing what I can to make a difference, because fishing is important to this community and our state," Ervin says.

If the salmon burger is successful in Kodiak, McDonald's may market it elsewhere in the USA. Last year, McDonald's franchises in Norway launched their own salmon burger.

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STREAMSIDE LOGGING IS TAKING ITS TOLL ON FISH

Many have warned of the impacts on fish by clear-cut logging, but the ability of science to quantify those impacts has lagged behind by half a century. Federal fisheries biologists have published the results of a 20-year study of the impacts of logging on Vancouver Island's Carnation Creek Experimental Watershed.

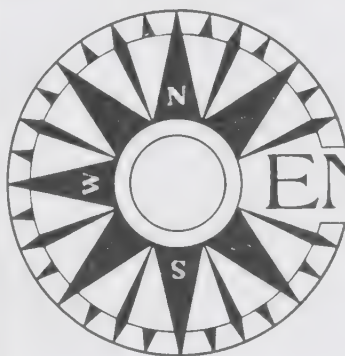
They found that, while numbers and growth of coho and trout fry initially increased immediately following streamside logging, (as a result of increased light, nutrients and temperature), growth in older coho and trout decreased. Chum fry also migrated to the ocean earlier, resulting in decreased marine survival.

Streamside logging further "decreased channel stability and large, woody debris in the stream, and changed the

composition of spawning gravel. The long-term impact of these logging activities, which ultimately reduced fish survival and numbers, required 10 years to fully manifest themselves and should persist for up to 80 years."

Without trees to provide shade and water, summer flows are lower and water temperatures higher. Sediment flushes into rivers from denuded slopes and logging roads. One study of headwater basins in the western Cascades of Oregon revealed that sediment yield remained four times higher than before logging — more than 20 years after logging stopped.

When suspended solids settle, they often smother eggs. Fewer than half of trout and salmon fry emerge from gravel containing 30 to 40 percent sand, the report said.



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ASTORIA

I often dream of Astoria, that city by the sea,
With all those half-forgotten memories
and what they meant to me.

The smell of rotting salmon, floating past cannery sites.
The sounds of a brawl outside Suomi Hall every Saturday night.
The muttered curses of fishermen, now long gone away
as they spoke of old "Tule" Thompson and his damned CRPA.

Now Astor Street's a memory of many, many moons,
Of good old Anna Bay and her famous New Richmond Rooms.
Where one could meet all sorts of... Astoria's social life,
providing one was single, or at least without a wife.

The builders of Astoria, the shaker and the mover,
Came from near and far to that famous bar
of old August Ericson's famous Louvre.

The drinks were cheap, the lunch was free
and a gal for each customer was in the balcony.
There were card games for relaxation for those who stood the test
of being known to all and sundry as one of "Astoria's best."

The girls were the friendliest, the drinks were almost free,
The athletic customer could balance each upon a sturdy knee.
The rooms were warm, the rates were right,
they charged one by the hour, day or night.

Thiel Brothers had the corner where old timers would often tell
of days gone past, prosperity gone, before business went to hell.
Of twenty-ton seining hauls and weekends full of sin,
of fortunes made on Miller Sands before the dams came in.

Still, on Commercial Street, I remember with a sigh
A crowd was always playing pool or cards in Recreation nearby.
The beer was cheap, the food was fair, the conversation curt,
from the customer playing cards and about to lose his shirt.

To go back and forth across the river one took the *Tourist* ferry,
Loaded down with cars and all the passengers it could carry.
On whether or not old Fritz would be shot as he ran over the nets.

The Scandinavians of Uppertown and then the Uniontown Finns
Those houses of bright and cheerful, shining like a packet of pins.
The front doors always open, no one ever thought of locks,
plenty of fishing on the river and longshoring on the docks.

Uppertown had its Gunderson's, Uniontown Hellberg's was a might.
Downtown Astoria had Lawson's, I hope I've got it right,
for places to go to see and show your date on Saturday night.

I remember the thrills and clashes of wills,
I don't know which was greater.
When I recall with a grin, that spot of sin,
that dark balcony in the old Liberty Theatre.

You can't top Astoria's history, that's one impossible feat.
So, for their Golden Rule, Lewis and Clark received a school,
and John Jacob Astor was given a street.

Time marches on as I recall with many a tear and sigh,
for the happy times and memories of old Astoria High.
Of men like Emmett Towler and Honest John Warren too,
who said "Life is a game and if you want fame,
it all depends on you."

So now I close and pass on the torch to Astoria's future generation.
If you can half our fun and still stay in life's run
you have my greatest admiration.

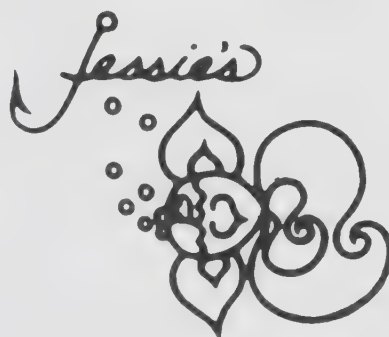
—Charles E. Haddox

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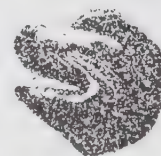
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VICTOR O. CARLSON

1907-1994

Lifetime Astoria resident and gillnet fisherman Victor O. Carlson passed away at his home just east of Astoria Sunday, January 16. He was 86.

Born in Astoria March 18, 1907 to Victor and Lisett Carlson, Mr. Carlson spent his childhood and most of his adult life in Alderbrook. In 1953, he moved to the John Day area, where he lived at the time of his death.

Mr. Carlson began gillnet fishing on the Columbia at the age of 12, his first gillnet boat a wooden "double-ender" which was donated to the Columbia River Maritime Museum. His most recent boat, built in 1950, was well known on the river.

Mr. Carlson, an avid hunter, was affectionately known as "Uncle Vic." He devoted much of his time to teaching his nephews the skills of hunting and gillnetting.

Surviving are a sister, Lisett Haglund of Astoria; three nieces, Mavis Jolliffe and Lisett Gleason, both of Milwaukie and Nancy Haglund of Portland; and nine nephews. A brother, Edwin J. Carlson, died earlier.

ALFRED E. MERSHON

1927-1994

Columbia River gillnet fisherman Alfred Mershon of Troutdale died in Portland March 15. He was 67.

Mr. Mershon was born January 3, 1927, in Portland. His family moved to Mayger when he was 6, and also lived in Corbett. He graduated from Corbett High School in 1945. He married Norma Kent on May 26, 1950 in Gresham. She survives.

A member of the U.S. Army from 1946-47, Mr. Mershon worked as a gillnet fisherman on the Columbia out of Astoria and on Bristol Bay, Alaska for many years. He was a member of the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Mershon is survived by three sons: Daniel, Paul and Philip; a daughter, Karen M. Beyer; three brothers; two sisters, six granddaughters and four grandsons.

ELLEN T. RISWICK

1914-1994

Mrs. Ellen T. Riswick of Astoria passed away in Tigard Saturday, January 29. She was 79.

Mrs. Riswick was born in Astoria March 5, 1914, to Henry and Ellen Lunki. As a child, she moved with her family to Finland and remained there until she was in the third grade, when the family returned to Astoria.

She completed her education in the local area, and graduated from Astoria High School. She later attended a local business college and worked as an aide at Columbia Hospital, as well as local seafood canneries. She enjoyed gardening and was well-known for her "green thumb."

Mrs. Riswick married fisherman Donald Riswick in 1947 in Astoria. He survives at the family home in Astoria.

Also surviving are son Kenneth Riswick of Beaverton; daughter Glenda Kaufman of Plantation, Florida; two stepsons, David Riswick of Honolulu and Donald Riswick of Port Orchard, Wash.; brother Henry Lunki of Astoria; granddaughter Julie Ann Riswick of Beaverton; three nephews, Henry Lunki Jr. of Aloha, Fred Lunki of Tacoma and Charles Lunki of Svensen; one great-nephew, Glen Ely and a great-niece, Roxanne Ely, both of Warrenton; and close family friend Sylvia Chestnut of Astoria.

Inurnment was held at Ocean View Cemetery.

LYDIA P. SIVERSON

1891-1994

Lydia Pauline Siverson passed away in Astoria January 14. She was 102.

Born in East Towas, Michigan on July 18, 1891 to Soloman and Josephine Johnson, Mrs. Siverson came to Astoria in 1914, and married Chris Siverson in April of 1918. She worked at two local stores before her marriage.

A devoted wife and homemaker, Mrs. Siverson enjoyed sewing and was a member of First Lutheran Church.

She is survived by a daughter, Norma Bennett of Renton, Wash.; a son, George Siverson of Astoria; six grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren, one niece and two nephews.



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FREDERICK W. ERICKSON

1904-1994

Longtime Columbia River gillnet fisherman Frederick W. Erickson died in Longview, Wash. on January 18. He was 89.

Mr. Erickson was born December 26, 1904 to William and Magdalena Niemala Erickson. He married Agnes Sylvia Mickelson in Long Beach, Wash. in August of 1937. She preceded him in death on September 13, 1974.

A commercial fisherman on the Columbia and Alaska for 65 years, Mr. Erickson fished for Point Adams Packing Co. and was a member of the Columbia River Fishermen's Union, the Old Alaska Fishermen's Union, the Alaska Independent Fishermen's Marketing Association and the Oak Point Drift and Eagle Cliff Snag Association for many years.

Surviving are two daughters, Kay Cook of Longview, and Patricia Erickson Smith of Vancouver; a brother, George Erickson of Beaverton; two sisters, Sarah Finley of Laguna Hills, Calif. and Adella Berchdorf of Pleasanton, Calif.; five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

RALPH E. LARSON

1910-1993

Ralph Eugene Larson, longtime Columbia River gillnet fisherman, passed away at his home near Astoria December 27, 1993. He was 83.

Mr. Larson was born in Grays River, Wash. July 2, 1910, to Berg and Magda Larson. The family moved to a dairy farm in Lewis and Clark when Ralph was 7 years old.

Mr. Larson started gillnet fishing on the river at age 17. He also worked as a logger and as a construction worker on the Westport jetty project. He was known as a "Gentleman gillnetter" and fished a drift on the red light. He was an avid deer, elk and duck hunter, and also played the accordion at local dances and receptions.

He married Eva Martha Klahr in South Bend, Wash. in June of 1936.

Surviving are a daughter and son-in-law, Carol and Ed Lahti of Astoria; a son and daughter-in-law, Ernie and Christie Larson of Knappa; a sister and brother-in-law, Lorna and Ernest Kairala of Astoria; four grandchildren and two nieces.

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Troubled waters

"I don't think it's a fair fight, and I don't think sport fishermen are correct," says City of Naples Natural Resource Manager Jon Staiger, who has used commercial gear in his research.

Habitat loss is a major culprit, he said, noting that houses and seawalls all along the Florida coastline have seriously altered the estuaries, home to many young fish. Three-fourths of the mangroves which lined Naples Bay in the 1930s have been destroyed by development, Staiger says.

Mosquito spraying, drainage of the Everglades and pollution has eliminated the food of many larger fish, and the natural flow of the water has gone, Johnson adds. "It's not only the fisheries. The birds have gone. Gillnets didn't do that," he says.

Twenty years ago, sports fishermen could catch anything they wanted, Johnson says. But new regulations have curtailed them as well, and now they are taking it out on commercial fishermen with this measure.

"They're acting like the fish we're catching is going to waste," he adds. "It's one of the oldest professions in the world, and they're making us feel like criminals," Johnson says, "when all we're doing is feeding the nation. If they'd put their money into Everglades restoration instead of bitching, you'd see a big difference."

One of the main problems is there's not enough fish to go around, many say, and fishing is open to all comers. Transient fishermen arrive for the fishing season, don't care about the resource and are just in it for the money, some say. Local gillnetters, on the other hand, seem

to be truly concerned about their environment and eager to save the resource, judging from reported attendance at town meetings discussing the issue.

Staiger says the gillnet ban has a fairly good chance of passing because sport fishermen are better organized, better funded and have greater numbers. They also have the support of key peripheral industries such as recreational boat and tackle manufacturers, who directly profit from them.

Florida has about 5 million recreational fishermen, including annual visitors who fish, compared to about 6,000 resident commercial fishermen, but Jerry Sansom, director of Organized Fishermen of Florida, says the commercial fishing industry generates more than \$2 billion per year into the state's overall economy.

Sport fishermen have offered to help fund compensation for displaced gillnetters with a \$3 increase in recreational license fees.

In Johnson's thoughtful analogy, like the challenge scientists faced trying to convince the world the earth was round, not flat, commercial fishermen and their interests must convince confused Florida voters that banning gillnets is not the answer to the recovery of the fisheries.

—From the Naples Daily News

MARINE MAMMAL UPDATE

Oregon's population of harbor seals has more than doubled in the past ten years, while British Columbia's has increased ten-fold since 1970.

On the West Coast, California sea lion populations nearly doubled from 1978 to 1988, increasing to 67,000 from less than 36,000.

The percentage of adult salmonids in the Columbia with visible seal-bite marks has also dramatically increased from 0.4 percent in 1980 to nearly 20 percent in 1990.

Meanwhile, at Port Warren condominiums in Warrenton, residents have had just about enough of about a dozen pesky sea lions who have made several floats in the complex's private mooring basin their new home.

"It's really disgusting," said one PW resident. "You can't even sleep nights with the noise they make, and the mess..."

The combined weight from the massive mammals, which can weigh up to 1,000 pounds, has all but sunk the floats on which they reside.

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Dams

zone and estuarine division in Seattle. "Everyone had thought survival increased with bypass systems."

The Corps is trying to address its problems, partly with extensive model studies at its Waterways Experiment Station in Vicksburg, Miss. But nothing comes clear quickly.

One of the largest models replicates Bonneville and a 3.4-mile stretch of the river at a 1:100 scale. The Corps originally built it to aid in layout, design and fish preservation measures of the new larger lock at the dam.

More recently, researchers have used the model to test the length and placement of hoods that protect from the top of the turbine intakes at Bonneville's second powerhouse. They create flow patterns that guide fish upward toward the deflection screens.

Another large model — nearly as long as a football field — is a 1:80 replication of The Dalles Dam, where the Corps plans to install 70 screens on its multiple-bay turbine intakes and a new 1-mile flume to carry juveniles farther downstream to an offshore outlet. Those modifications are slated to be finished by 1998 at an estimated cost of \$121.5 million.

That is only one of the larger currently-planned projects. Others include open helix flumes for young salmon at two or more dams, similar to one completed at Little Goose Dam in 1991.

In addition to the sprawling general models, Corps researchers work with large-scale sectional models of project components. One that went into operation in 1993 is a plexiglass simulated turbine intake. It has a non-intrusive, com-

The bypass outlet at Bonneville is in slow water and is too close to the shore. Squawfish congregate at the outlet and feast on dazed salmon as they emerge

puter-monitored laser system that senses tiny silver-coated glass beads in the water, measuring velocities anywhere in the model.

Designers and researchers fine-tune improvements on the models, finally testing prototypes at dam sites. The process doesn't move quickly. Addressing fish deflection screens, Walla Walla district chief engineer Mark Lindgren says, "The problem is there are an infinite number of variables in materials, porosity and size."

He says an extended 40-foot traveling screen with rotating polyester fabric is 20 percent more effective than a standard 20-foot fixed one.

Peters sums up the conundrum: "Things don't work the same at every dam. We are designing projects on a schedule dictated by Congress or the region, and that makes us nervous," says Lindgren.

Much of the pressure comes from the Northwest Power Planning Council, created by Congress in 1980 to plan for

energy needs as well as restoration of fish and wildlife impacted by federal dams in the region.

The Corps was to submit a first-phase report to the NPPC in late 1993 on structural alternatives to improving salmon migration. As part of its study, the Corps conducted a month-long drawdown test at two Snake River dams in the spring of 1992. The theory was that lowering pools of water and increasing water velocity would speed the juvenile salmon migrations, making them less vulnerable to predators and disease.

The result was havoc!

Hydropower output dropped 40 percent, barge traffic in the area halted, irrigation pumps were left dry, and extensive damage was reported at marinas. Many fish were stranded in stray pools as well. Corps engineers now say drawdowns may be "counterproductive."

One certain negative is that while water pours over the spillways, becoming saturated with nitrogen, the fish are severely dazed, and many come up dead.

The Corps says annual drawdowns at the five uppermost dams would require modifications costing \$1.3 to 4.9 billion, and these options are only a part of the range of alternatives.

The most drastic would be building massive gated structures adjacent to four dams on the Snake, creating free flow, which would cost about \$5 billion. Maintaining free flow for the migration period of four and a half months, plus drawdown and refilling time, would put the dams out of service for ten months each year, according to Sarah Wik, a fish biologist who challenges the entire theory.

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William McNeil, a professor of fisheries at Oregon State University's Hatfield Marine Science Center in Corvallis who conducted a biological study for a group of aluminum companies in the area, says there may be no benefit to fish from faster flows. His study found that migration timing is affected by many factors, including barometric pressure, wind, rainfall, water turbidity, length of day, type of species, age and size of fish and whether they are wild or raised in a hatchery.

Still, pressure mounts.

"We have a lot of people involved who do not understand the complexities," says Wik. "To get where we are took so long, and we tried so many things. Many people in the fisheries don't know that. They think we don't want to try anything."

The Bonneville Power Administration, which markets electricity from federal dams in the Northwest, also is under the gun. In the past ten years, it paid dam owners \$1 billion for fish programs.

"BPA spent \$1 billion, and the fish still haven't turned around," says Nason.

Utilities are pressing the agency to spend less on fish, and especially on hatchery programs, which they believe are ineffective. At issue are fish protection measures budgeted at more than \$160 million in the next two years.

Dams higher on the Columbia seem free of fish problems for now. Wells, owned by Douglas County, has adequate fish passage. Above that, the Corps's Chief Joseph and the Bureau of Reclamation's Grand Coulee have none.

The bureau is making its best effort to manage what's there now. It plans to install a \$70-million shutter structure on the upstream face of Shasta Dam on the Sacramento River to permit selective releases of cold bottom water.

Workers are now completing installation of two curtains behind Whiskeytown Dam on Clear Creek near Redding, Calif., at a cost of \$2.3 million. The largest, close to the dam, is 100 feet deep. The curtains, similar to the smaller one in place at Lewiston Dam on the Trinity River near Weaverville, Calif., helps cool water temperature in the summer months.

Despite mounting criticism, biologist Jim LaBounty is optimistic about future fish passage capabilities at dams. "We can have our cake and eat it too."

SNAG DIVING

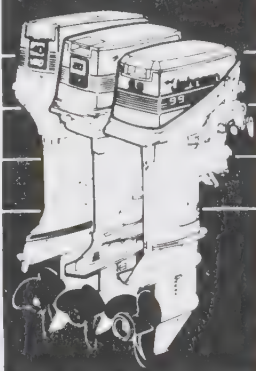
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Whether by necessity or ignorance, man has severely reduced the available salmon spawning grounds in British Columbia.

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The long, snaking gravel beds are ideal for wild salmon to lay their eggs, while controlling conditions which normally claim a high percentage of eggs. Because the man-made gravel bottoms are uniform, it allows wild salmon more area in which to spawn, and the survival rate of the eggs is significantly increased.

The Seton Creek project at Lillooet was launched to offset the harsh impact of a nearby hydroelectric station. In 1961, the experimental channel was be-

gun to make up for the some 30,000 square feet of spawning grounds taken by the hydropower canal.

The "new" spawning grounds consist of two channels, the upper about 2,900 feet long and 20 feet wide with a constant water depth of nearly two feet. This water supply is pumped in by two giant pumps, which lift water over the canal embankment and discharge it into the diffusion basin at the upper end of the channel.

Nearly 15,000 salmon used the spawning grounds in 1993, more than the facility had room for, and the surplus spawners must use the adjacent natural spawning grounds at Seton Creek. Throughout its operation, however, the upper channel has produced adult returns at a rate of 1.8 to 6.4 times greater than the natural spawning grounds.

The pressing need for additional spawning area for pinks in Seton Creek resulted in the construction of a second spawning channel, which was completed

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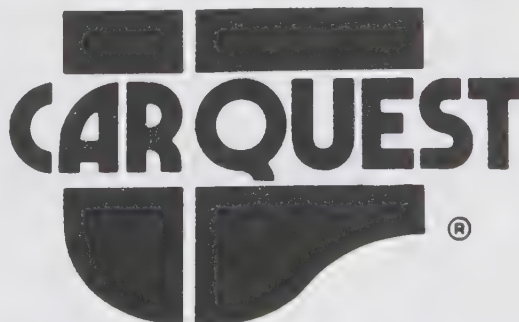
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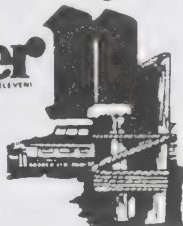
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in 1967, located about one mile downstream from the upper channel on land leased from the Cayoose Indians.

As with the upper channel, the lower channel has often produced more return spawners than are allowed in the channel. In its first four years of operation, this channel produced an average of 60,000 surplus spawners, and has produced returns at an average rate of 5.3 times greater than the natural spawning grounds at Seton Creek.

In these channels, the conditions for spawning are better than the natural conditions in a river or streambed. The large rocks or concrete used to line the sides of the channel prevent bank erosion and discourage salmon from spawning at the edges of the channel. Such spawning can lead to the erosion of soil from unprotected channel banks.

The gravel used in a spawning channel is washed and sorted to size. Pink and sockeye salmon prefer gravel about 1.3 to 10 centimeters in diameter, whereas chum like gravel a bit coarser.

Crowding of spawners in a channel is prevented by the use of gates which block off sections of the channel already used by spawners.

The flow of water through a spawning channel is controlled to prevent floods and to ensure a minimum water level during dry periods. Conditions are then stable for the incubation of salmon eggs which produce "alevins." The young salmon grow quickly and become fry.

Generally, a water intake from a lake rather than a river is preferred for spawning channels, as lake water is often cleaner and prevents winter icing of the channel. During the dry seasons, the lake acts as a natural storage reservoir to supply a channel with a minimum water flow.

Spawning channels are built mainly for sockeye, pink and chum salmon. Several months after the eggs are hatched, the sockeye juveniles leave the channel and migrate to large lakes nearby. In contrast, chum and pink salmon fry migrate downstream to the estuaries of the rivers flowing to the sea.

These spawning channels, because of their controlled conditions, increase salmon egg-to-fry survival rates dramatically, in some cases upwards of 60 percent.

—From the Lillooet News



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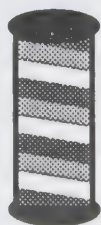


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Dam removal

The powerful Northwest aluminum industry, the region's largest single user of electricity, is fighting back with a slick new ad campaign, a misleading attempt to paint gillnet fishermen as massive harvesters of endangered salmon, and improve its image as a "bad guy." Dams, of course, aren't mentioned.

The ads, which said "several hundred threatened wild adult salmon will be killed" during the '94 winter gillnet season, have taken harsh criticism for inaccurate and missing information from a variety of interests, because the actual total percentage of endangered upriver salmon caught by lower river gillnetters is miniscule.

And what about the hundreds of threatened Snake River salmon caught by sportfishermen? The Northwest is apparently blessed with a good number of talented anglers, because the numbers show sportsmen catch just as many and, in some cases, many *more* fish than gillnetters do, and this fact is not talked about in the ads either.

Just last year, sportfishermen landed nearly 40,000 sturgeon from the river, while gillnetters took just 8,000. Coho anglers also kept pace with gillnetters in 1993, with both landing about 20,000 each.

Forty-three percent of all the aluminum manufactured in the USA is made here in the Northwest. The aluminum industry, as a result, is the largest single user of electricity, consuming more than 20 percent of the available power in the region.

And dams produce abundant electrical power.

At the same time, Northwest aluminum

"When the Army Corps of Engineers built the dams, it did not do what Congress told it to do — to build and operate them in ways that protected the fish."

manufacturers have enjoyed drastically reduced electricity rates for years, made possible by the cheap power produced by the dams. And Tacoma economist Jim Lazar says the average household in the Northwest pays some \$3.75 extra per month to subsidize these slashed aluminum power rates.

Paul Koberstein, a Portland journalist, says Kerr's proposal, although scientifically solid, won't fly because it "violates the political and economic status quo of the region" and would create an energy surplus.

"The region's aluminum smelters consume more than twice the power that is produced by the dams that Kerr would tear down," Koberstein says. The aluminum industry operates ten giant smelters in Oregon, Washington and Montana.

Few argue the fact that dams have taken a heavy toll on fish survival. "About 90 percent of the human-caused mortality is from the hydro system," says Katherine Ransel, an attorney for the group *American Rivers*. "It is absolutely crazy to me that one wouldn't start rebuilding the runs there."

Crazy maybe, but there is great resistance to fiddling with a hydroelectric sys-

tem that provides an abundance of clean and cheap electricity (the Northwest's power rates are 75 percent less than those in New England).

It may take more than a federal judge to get the wrecking balls rolling.

"It's really very simple," says Ed Chaney, Idaho salmon advocate. "When the Army Corps of Engineers built the dams, it did not do what Congress told it to do — to build and operate them in ways that protected the fish."

And that hasn't happened.

Bill Bakke, director of conservation group Oregon Trout, agrees. "These dams were built without regard for fish. If you are going to restore the ecosystem, it may well be the logical conclusion is to remove some of these dams."

Kerr realizes he faces an uphill battle. "My job is to speak for the fish, because they can't speak for themselves. The question is, what is necessary to save the fish, and do we want to pay the price. If society doesn't want to do that, they can make that choice."

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Historic Oregon Fish Fights *continued*

leave enough fish to satisfy the sport interests. Thus, commercial fishermen arguing for the referendum to overturn the actions of the legislature in closing the Rogue River said in 1932:

"There are plenty of fish for both the touring angler and the commercial fishermen. The commercial industry should have the surplus of the harvest of chinook salmon, otherwise they just go to waste."

Generally, the commercial fishermen claimed they were providing fish for the consumer; that not everyone was willing or able to catch his own fish.

Sport anglers countered by arguing that their purpose was to preserve the opportunity to fish for everyone. Sportsmen claimed that commercial fishing benefited only a few wealthy businessmen, and that fishermen only worked part-time and were not dependent on fish for their livelihoods.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s commercial fishermen were criticized for being transients, coming up from San Francisco for the fishing season and then returning south with their earnings. People said these fishermen "were not a stable element of the population."

From the start, sport/commercial conflicts have asked a major philosophical question: "What is the appropriate use for salmon and other fisheries resources?" Is the appropriate use in stimulating a recreation industry?

Before WWII, salmon was an important staple food item. Its nutritional value was lauded, and its price made it competitive with other food items. After WWII, with rapid increases in population and farmland productivity, combined with more worker leisure time, salmon became an important component of a growing recreation industry.

The statewide ballot measures of 1956, 1962 and 1964 highlighted the "fish for food, fish for fun" theme which dated back to 1910 and the very first initiative attempt to close the Rogue River. Roderick Macleay, successor to R.D. Hume, commented on the attempts by anglers to stop commercial fishing on the Rogue:

"Sportsmen have enlisted the aid of those who, for their own purposes, are willing to make a 'play thing' of an Oregon industry."

Far more sport anglers fished for trout than for salmon and steelhead, however, fishing for fun became a major part of Oregon's third largest industry: recreation and tourism. Paradoxically, in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the salmon canning industry was Oregon's third largest.

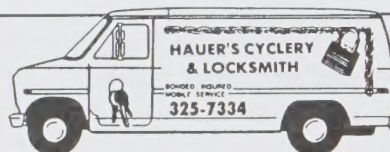
The importance of salmon in stimulating a recreation industry is a secondary economic impact of exploiting the salmon resource. Studies have been conducted comparing the value of each, but have not been conclusive because the is-

sue was not economic but philosophic, and the history of Oregon fish fights shows that there is no right answer. The answer is based on people's philosophies and the politics of winning broad acceptance of these philosophies.

The answers to the questions of fish for food or fish for fun; how salmon will best serve society; decision-making by specialized elites or through the electorate and the elimination of gear which harvests the most fish have not been sorted out. Each of these issues has consistently been a part of the process of determining who should have access to fish resources, and how much they should obtain.

Reviewing information on one-hundred years of Oregon fish fights does not provide any absolutes in terms of what is conservation, what are the continuing social needs which fisheries resources must serve or what policies should be followed.

Oregon fish fights illustrate that conservation is really a complex social and economic issue of competition for resource availability which is fought with the politics of conservation.



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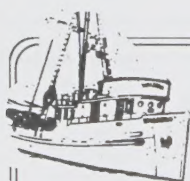
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"The catch word of 'conservation' is employed to give respectability to what is really a bold attempt to seize a fishing preserve."

Even the pattern of competition was not uniform. Gillnetters joined with labor, the Grange and even sportsmen to pass the 1926 initiative banning fishwheels, traps and seines, despite the staunch opposition of upriver and business interests.

Then, gillnetters joined with business interests in 1928 to help defeat a sports initiative which would have greatly restricted water appropriations from the Deschutes, McKenzie, Rogue and Umpqua rivers. In 1948, gillnetters and sport anglers joined forces to prohibit haul seines and "fixed appliances" on the river. The measure passed by a 273,000 to 185,000 vote.

One 1954 initiative prohibiting commercial fishing in certain coastal streams failed, but another two years later in the fall of 1956 was passed by voters by a near two-to-one margin.

In 1962, gillnetters again joined together with labor to oppose a restrictive sport initiative that would make steelhead a game fish, which was eventually ruled off the ballot by the Oregon Supreme Court because petitions were improperly titled.

In 1964, labor, industry, business and the Grange joined with gillnetters to oppose a sports measure which would have closed the Columbia to gillnetting. The proposed ini-

tiative failed on November 3, 1964, by more than a two-to-one margin.

Ballot measure #13, one of the most important initiatives in Oregon history which prohibited the commercial sale of steelhead, was approved by Oregon voters in November of 1974.

What did seem to have been a pattern in the politics of conservation was for each group to attempt to develop broad public support for its position. With public support, the initiative process was a good route to follow to get one's way.

Failing to acquire public support required a more elitist approach in attempting to protect or win an allocation of the resource.

A message in the November, 1928 edition of the *Oregon Voter's Pamphlet* best summarized the politics of conservation:

"The catch word of 'conservation' is employed to give respectability to what is really a bold attempt to seize a fishing preserve."

—Taken from archival research done by the Oregon State University Sea Grant Program

Threatened Idaho salmon reclaim some lost habitat

One chinook salmon run has reclaimed part of its lost habitat high in Idaho's Sawtooth Mountains, where the U.S. Forest Service has unblocked passage to a prime spawning and rearing ground of the upper Salmon River.

Biologists have found some 14 salmon nests or redds in a part of the river which has been inaccessible to spawning salmon for many years. The results are due to joint efforts by the Forest Service and the Bonneville Power Administration.

The upper Salmon River crosses the Busterback Ranch, which in the past di-

verted water for irrigation, often drying up the river. Adult salmon returning from the ocean could not reach their traditional spawning grounds upstream. The Forest Service and BPA bought the ranch in 1991, and after two years, salmon are spawning again in the Sawtooth Valley behind the ranch.

Idaho Fish and Game estimates that up to 1,200 additional spring chinook smolts could be annually produced in the additional redds. Fisheries officials hope restoration of the passage will also help endangered Snake River sockeye.

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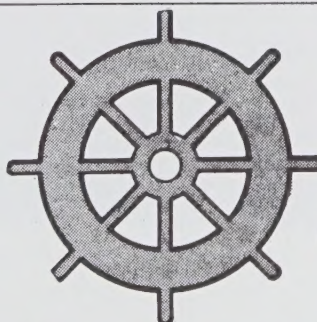
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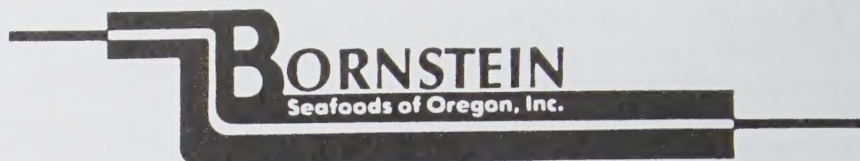
Marine safety training pays off

A recent Coast Guard report shows that the death toll among Alaska fishermen has dropped sharply since 1992.

"We've averaged just about 36 lives lost in Alaska in each of the past six years, but last year it was 24," says Coast Guard fishing vessel safety specialist Sue Jorgensen.

One of the reasons for the decline is the recently-implemented Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Program, which requires fishing boats with more than two persons to be certified in a Coast Guard-approved training course, like the one offered by Clatsop Community College.

Jorgensen speaks highly of the safety training class. "That's why it's so important for fishermen. That's what's going to bring these guys back."



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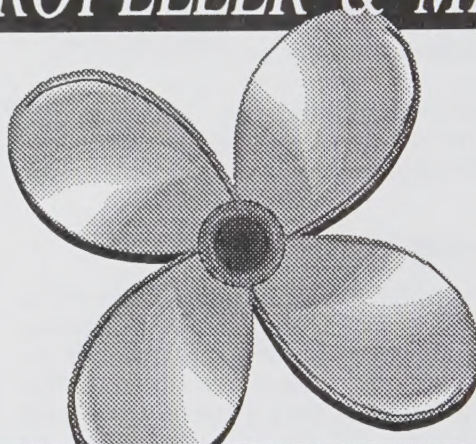
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